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ABSTRACT

The first in a set of five publications on the educational "ministry" begins with the title essay by Sister Rose Marie Hennessy. Citing Old and New Testament passages, the essay suggests that the Catholic School principal lives out a form of prophetic leadership in the church: to serve a given community in its relationship to God. "Guidelines for Reflection for Catholic School Principals," by Sister Mary James Merrick, further supports the concept that Christian administrators receive a special calling by citing scripture. God's grace in the principal's life, basic theological views, characteristics of Christian administrators, and the ministry of administration are briefly considered. A checklist, in the form of questions, pertaining to ways of relating with parents, the pastor, teachers, and children is followed by questions for reflection and suggested scripture readings. "Guidelines for Relection for Diocesan Office Personnel," by Brother Dominic Berardelli, asks a series of questions to suggest practical ways diocesan offices can redirect their school administrators to their authentic purpose as spiritual leaders of the school community. The final essay, "Guidelines for Reflections for Parish Directors of Religious Education," by Thomas Smith, outlines the responsibilities of the director of religious education (DRE) and suggests a model of the DRE as a prophet. (MLF)

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The Principal as Prophet

by Sister Rose Marie Hennessy, OP
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introduction

The *ministry* of education — Is the recent emphasis on ministry merely a passing fad? a vogue term? We think not; rather we regard the current focus on ministry as a renewal of the spirit of Jesus Christ. During His entire life, Christ ministered to others and during the Last Supper invited others to share that spirit.

To foster our renewed awareness, the NCEA Department of Elementary Schools -- over the next five years — will focus on five aspects of the educational ministry.

This first paper in the series offers an opportunity to reflect on the challenging ministry of the administrator. First presented at the 1978 NCEA Convention, *The Principal as Prophet* has been revised for this publication. The author, Sister Rose Marie Hennessy, is Associate Superintendent for Elementary Education, Diocese of Oakland, California; previously she served as principal at Sacred Heart High School in Los Angeles. Her administrative experience at the elementary-secondary level and her study of the ministry concept suggested her competency for this paper. We extend our appreciation to her.

Subsequent publications will focus on the ministerial charism of the teacher, the student, the parent, and the pastor. We sincerely hope that, through continuing reflection, we may all reach a renewed appreciation of the educational ministry.

Sister Mary Peter Traviss, OP
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the principal as prophet

Sister Rose Marie Hennessy, O.P.

A Catholic-school principal may be engaged or appointed by a search committee, board of education, religious community, a faculty, a parish council; but because of the purpose and nature of Catholic education, the acceptance and the responsibility of the post are the response to a call and require the prayerful reflection of discernment. The response to the call means more than matching the requirements of a job description; it means living out a form of prophetic leadership in the Church. The meaning of prophecy in Old and New Testament offers some guidance for discerning the prophetic role of the Catholic-school principal.

THE WAY OF MOSES AND THE PROPHETS

"There are no proofs for the existence of the God of Abraham. There are only witnesses."[1] Among the greatest of these were the Old Testament prophets. The word "prophet" comes from the Greek *prophētēs*, the etymology of which indicates that the prophet is one who speaks for or in the place of another. In studying the Hebrew term that *prophētēs* translates, W. F. Albright identifies a relationship to an Akkadian root meaning "to call" so that the prophet is one called by God to speak for Him.[2] The identity of the Old Testament prophets, then, was as persons with a call to speak for another — to speak for God. The grace of response to the call meant the gift of holding God and man in a single thought,[3] that is the prophets were chosen and empowered to be aware and to speak of God working in the present moment. The prophetic experience and function were linked to the meaning of God's relationship to the community in the here and now.

Moses may be viewed as the first of the Old Testament prophets. He was called to speak the Word of Yahweh to his own

[1]Abraham Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 22
[2]John L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible*, (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1965) p. 694.
[3]Heschel, *The Prophets*, p. 21.

people, with their particular characteristics, experiences, and longings. Moses was not a passive oracle or a detached observer. With his full personality, its strengths and weaknesses, he became the associate of God, struggled with and loved Him. Moses spoke to his own people in a way they could both hear and, however grudgingly, accept. His voice, his life sounded a summons to a return to the covenant and to a life lived in the truth of God. The insights of Moses penetrated into the mysteries of who Yahweh is and what contemporary events mean under Yahweh's Word. The insights brought unpopularity in the community at times and for Moses living out his prophetic call imposed demands on his life style.

Other Old Testament prophets underwent experiences of great spiritual intensity in accepting the call to a renewal of the covenant with Yahweh and to a life leading the way by their own example. This spiritual intensity — which is not the same as frenzied activity — at times brought peace to them, at times tension; at times consolation and at times distress. Central in the prophetic experience was the holding of God and community at privileged moments in one contemplative thought and one loving embrace. Because it is a contemplative moment, the experience of God and community is an experience apart and meant the prophet's sensitivity to more than the frenzy or the humdrum in the circumstances of living.

THE CALL OF THE PRINCIPAL

The fusion of the simultaneous experience of God and community should not be seen as remote from the school principal's life. The call does not come in the desert or on a mountain-top, but in the office, the schoolyard, at PTA meetings, on the telephone. The sound of the call comes not amid thunderclaps, but through the voices heard in conferences, meetings, dialogues, prayer sessions, workshops, and one-to-one conversation. Perceptiveness will reveal moments that are special, in which God and community are held in a unity. These are the moments of the most intense living out of the call to prophetic leadership. The intimacy of the relationship to God and community may not lead to peace and consolation at all times. Jeremiah's mar-

tyrdom testifies that the prophet may be called to choose suffering in order to convey God's message.[4] But the principal's is also a call to press for renewal of the covenant; it demands sincerity of life and a passion for the community's response to God and His Word.

Two elements from this reflection on the Old Testament suggest themselves as keys to the principal's role in Christian ministry. One is that the call to prophetic leadership comes first from God as the initiator. For radically the call is to the life of faith in which God's beginning and sustaining activity has the lead. The faith-life born at baptism God nurtures throughout life and concretely within the circumstances of a person's professional commitment.

Living out the call to speak the Word of God, then, requires a complete dependence on God, a trust that each day and each moment He is going to speak His Word through me to this community. There is need for total reliance on God's taking hold of me and involving me in His Word. Complete dependence is an attitude that goes counter to the cherished American ideal of independence. In this respect the call demands of the principal a kind of conversion. A life lived in dependence on the Lord might also demand changes in social and even financial security. It might mean risking unbalanced budgets and unfulfilled time plans, or involvement in relationships that are not appealing. Response to the call means willingness to pay the price of complete trust in God.

The second key element in the prophetic call is that it is a calling of this particular person to serve one particular group of people, one given community in its relationship to God. The implications require reflection on where the principal is called from and called to. Family, personal qualities, educational experiences, life experiences all will influence the carrying out of the call to educational ministry. The call is to a particular person and personality, with its strengths and weaknesses. The significant others and events in the administrator's life have, under God's guidance, shaped ways of thinking, acting, and responding. The principal in answering God's call needs to be aware of this personal past in order to adjust it to the present.

[4]Gerhard von Rad, *The Message of the Prophets* (London: SCM Press, 1968), p. 56.

The present is the community to be served. A principal may experience "transition trauma" in moving into a new situation. Things are not done the same way; people do not respond in the same way. Yet the principal must accept the call to *this* community. The call is to embrace in prophetic ministry this student body, these parents, this parish community. The call of the Lord is given to embrace the present. Passion for the community is a *sine qua non* for a life of prophetic service. The Old Testament prophets were intent on remolding the life of their own people, in their own time, into something more worthy; their gaze was not fixed on the past or on the future, but on the present. By reworking today, with their people as they were, they sought to lead to a next moment that would be more worthy of the people of God living out a covenant with their Lord.[5] The school principal is called to be a visionary, but the vision is not a dream; it is a view of the present as it is and as it can be under God's Word.

NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY

Jesus Christ comes into history as Son of God and Son of Man. He is the fulfillment and the fullness of prophecy. In His person He not only speaks for God, He is God speaking—He is the Word of God. He calls God's people as Church, not just to renewal of the covenant but to share in the new covenant. The people of God that Jesus constituted are a Spirit-filled community. New Testament prophecy is not an office in the Church,[6] but a passing gift. The gift includes inspired preaching;[7] prophetic ministry is among the gifts given as part of the Church's foundation (Eph 2:20); given for the building up of the Church (1 Cor 14:5); for consolation and exhortation, open to all (Acts 15:32; 1 Cor 14:31). In the early Christian communities the prophet was called from the community, as one among equals. The message of the prophet is for the community and is judged by the com-

[5]Rolland Emerson Wolfe, *Men of Prophetic Fire* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1951), p. 313.

[6]Terence J. Forestall, "The Letter to the Thessalonicans," *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 233.

[7]Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Letter to the Romans," *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, et al. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968), vol. 2, p. 325.

munity, because the charism is promised to the community as a whole.[8]

The promise and the gift continue. The Christian community of every age is Spirit-filled because of incorporation into Christ. Vatican Council II clearly taught that the People of God through Baptism are made sharers in Christ's prophetic office *(Lumen gentium* 12). Fulfillment of the prophetic office, bearing witness to the Gospel, is, then, one part of living the vocation common to all the baptized. That vocation is lived out as a witness within the terms of each person's life and circumstances. The Catholic-school principal's response to the call to office is properly a response to the Christian vocation itself. Principals need to see themselves as coming from and as part of the Spirit-filled community, the Church. They can rely on the charisms fitting their call to speak the word of God, to bear witness in the community and to the community. Theirs is a privileged expectation simply because the ministry of Catholic education is part of the ministry of the Word (see *Sharing the Light of Faith);* New Testament prophecy is above all witnessing the Gospel.

The call of that ministry is to further the mission of Jesus: to build the kingdom; the kingdom of God is, but it is also not-yet. The principal is called on to experience the tension that striving towards the kingdom involves. The tension will be felt within the actualities of this particular community, at this particular time. As a witness to Gospel values, sharing in Jesus' office the prophetic principal will have to be a counter-sign, summoning all to share in the building of a kingdom of justice, truth, peace, and love. That may mean risk-taking, going above or against contemporary cultural values. Prophetic principals are called to be conscience-raisers. The living out of the baptismal vocation in this office of leadership may require dying to self, to personal concerns, to comforting security, for the sake of proclaiming God's relationship to this community; for the sake of bringing God's Word to bear on its life.

Because the principal is summoned out of the Spirit-filled community, then fulfillment of the call must be accompanied by a fear of being "over" people. The promise is to the community; the prophetic witness is for the community. The community in

[8]H. A. Guy, *New Testament Prophecy* (London: Epworth Press, 1947), p. 93.

its response and in its receptivity always has a message for the prophet. The prophetic insight itself will be deepened and perceived more surely as it comes from God through experience with the community. There should always be a process of dialogue and of dialect between prophet and community. The principal-prophet is one who always manifests a willingness to listen and an openness to the judgement of the community.

From the realization of the community setting of the principal's ministry emerge other characteristics. One is reluctance. The realization of the intense relationship with the Lord and His people can be overwhelming. The result is a respectful hesitancy to claim the prophetic role. The realization of the need for the Word of God begets a care not to mistake personal judgement for the Word of the Lord. Another characteristic based on the power of the Word is creativity. The prophet has confidence in the efficacy of the Word to bring about something new, something more formed, something improved.

Matthew Fox points out as the first sign of true contemporary prophecy, personal rerooting.[9] The root of the prophet's life is love. For the prophet is a prophet of the New Covenant, the covenant of love, in which love of the Lord dominates and takes possession of the prophet. That love will prompt compassion, listening to the community, and listening to the Lord. That love will empower the principal to respond to the call to prophetic leadership, even when it involves physical uprooting, loss of the security of a familiar surrounding and loving acceptance. Love is the life of the Spirit-filled community. It will enable the principal to speak the Word of God in life through a community dialectic, to proclaim that Word for the building up of the Church, and to bring about a deeper understanding of divine mysteries. The response to the call will be inspired by love to console, to exhort, to heal, to encourage others to be open to the Word. Love will make the principal ever sensitive to being called and to call others to the experience of God and community held in one loving embrace.

[9]Matthew Fox, *On Becoming a Musical Mystical Bear*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), p. 109 ff.

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guidelines for reflection for catholic school principals

Sister Mary James Merrick, OSF

As the prophets of the Old Testament, so, too, Christian administrators, principals at some point in their lives receive a special call, are chosen as God's envoy to proclaim God's demands, and to be 'signs' of this divine will in their own persons. God has given principals a glimpse of the vision and called them to speak out and share that vision, and to allow other members of the faculty also to share in the vision so that the total will of God can be accomplished. Principals must have the courage to proclaim that vision and leave the rest to the Lord.

"Uphold the torch of truth, though devoured by the flame" (Gibran).

Not only the words they speak and the actions they perform but their whole lives tell of God. The genuine prophet is fully aware that he is a mouthpiece, no more; his words, though his own, are not his own. He has no doubt that the Word of God has come to him and that he must pass the "Good News" on to others.

"Proclaiming the Gospel is a perennial task and joy for the Church of Jesus Christ . . ." (To Teach As Jesus Did #6).

The principal in a Catholic school has as highest priority the building of a Christian community of faith. The principal is a witness to the Good News of Jesus, a sharer in the fellowship of the Spirit, and a servant of the community.

I. God's Grace in the Christian Administrator's (Principal's) Life:

- Love yourself for what God's grace has done and is doing in your life.

  Scripture References: Eph 3 : 7-9; Jn 1 : 3; Lk 10 : 16; Mt 10 : 7
- You are God's person and the recipient of His grace; through His Word you have been and are shaped.

  Scripture References: Lk 1 : 38; 1 Jn 6 : 12; 2 Tm 1 : 12; Eph 1 : 9-10; Rom 14 : 8.

- Do not underrate God's personal call. Articulate God's grace in your life.

  Scripture References: Is 43 : 1; Is 50 : 4; Dt 31 : 6
- Let God take good care of you: respond to the Lord's promise of faithfulness; trust Him.

  Scripture References: Heb 13 : 5-6; Ps 37 : 3-5, 7; Acts 27 : 23; Jn 16 : 33; Jn 14 : 26; Mt 11 : 28-30
- "Delight in the Lord"; experience success in your ventures because you put trust in the Lord all the way. God can be great to the degree of your trust in Him.

  Scripture References: Mt 10 : 19-20, 28-33; 1 Cor 1 : 26-31.

The QUALITY OF MINISTRY in the life of PRINCIPALS is enhanced significantly by the manner in which they let the grace of God happen in their lives.

II. Basic Theological Views

A. "YOUR WORD IS TRUTH" and this makes our schools profoundly different. The many values in Scripture prove our stand. "If you don't stand for something, you fall for everything." Teach students to "live according to God's Word" as the guiding principle of their decisions and actions. Jn 14 : 6.

- Use the Word of God to lead parents to make good decisions for their children. Encourage parents to think theologically in recognizing the Lordship of God in their lives. Do we neglect to educate parents to the total dimension of the lives of their children as God's own?
- "In Your Light we see Light." We need to shed God's light on situations of principalship, embrace God's will. Eph 5 : 8-10; Jn 12 : 44. Be God's prophet and instrument of His grace. When parents are inclined to let children make the decision where they will go to school, try to move to the understanding of the Lord's place in their home. "You'll be much happier with this decision (choosing the Catholic school for your child) because the Lord is on your side." With the gift of children, there comes the awesome responsibility not to mutilate the spirit of a child, but to lead him to the Truth.

B. "I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY." Believe in God's fatherhood: holding you in His hands and calling

you by name: Is 43 : 1-3; Jer 18 : 6-7; Is 49 : 1-5; Is 64 : 7-8. Authentic life styles emerge only from a belief system. Your life as a principal is an expression of what you believe. Believe in the dignity of man: select your teachers with care and concern; remember that they are special; stand behind them, pay them. Love the person, but critique the action. 2 Tm 1 : 13-14; 2 Thes 3 : 3-5.

C. **"I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST."** Belief in Jesus Christ prompts *forgiveness* and *new life:* Eph 3 : 12; Col 3 : 10; Eph 4 : 22-24. Wherever there are failings, forgiveness must be happening, and new life, the power of Jesus Christ, released. Try to integrate past experiences with the positive attitude that God has given you new opportunities to promote his love and goodness here on earth. "Create a new heart in me. O Lord." That makes education different.

- The most distinctive purpose for which a Catholic school exists is the vocational pursuit of education. They are "claimed" people. God is at work in their lives to help them see who they are that they may fully serve the Lord. Your job is to help them serve the Lord and give themselves back to the Lord. Eph 3 : 11-13.

D. **"I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT."** The power of the Holy Spirit is available to each principal and classroom teacher to bring about change: Jn 14 : 16-18, 26; Jn 16 : 13-14. The Holy Spirit calls, gathers, sanctifies, keeps the students and staff in His care. The team-teaching dimension of Catholic education is allowing the Holy Spirit to team with the classroom teacher. Eph 4 : 30; 1 Thes 5 : 19-22; 2 Pet 1 : 21; 1 Jn 4 : 2; Jd 1 : 20.

E. **"I BELIEVE IN LIFE EVERLASTING:"** (Jn 14; Jn 11) The principal's *time* perspective prepares for eternal life.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHRISTIAN ADMINISTRATOR

For each assignment the Lord calls, He prepares. As principals in Catholic education, chosen workers in His Church, He has His hands upon you. You need to stand out in front and make things happen for the building up of the Church. 2 Tm 1:6-7; 2 Tm 2 : 2-26; Rom 12 : 1-21.

Each individual principal needs to stir up that gift within and give testimony for Catholic education: let that healthy gift of God's grace come alive. Do not let anyone put you down. No matter how gloomy statistics may seem, the Lord is with you: "I stand before you with power." He is using your mouth, your life, with His Spirit of power and love. Be God's person out there, as conscience raiser for the people in precisely those matters where conscience raising is needed. Full of confidence in His power, you are called to this: or else, what is Catholic education all about?

THE MINISTRY OF ADMINISTRATION

"We are made courageous by the principles
we are committed to."

The Principal, as Prophet, is a teacher or spokesman of the Word of God, who touches the lives of many people in many ways.

"For surely the Lord is in this place.
The message we speak is from him.
The vision we have seen is his to give,
to deliver to the peoples of the world" (Sandra Hermann).

Living out this call demands a new lifestyle, complete dependence on God, and a "return" to the community principals are called to serve. They may experience acceptance, rejection, or possibly be ignored.

"And if they will not listen,
and if they have eyes that will not see,
and if the mocking laughter rises like flames,
we shall still feel the Hand
of the One who will not let us go." (Sandra Hermann).

"Sometimes, after the prophet has received a call and gone to work for God, circumstances arise that threaten his work or his life. Then fear and mistrust are born again into the relationship between God and prophet—and the prophet runs away. But God follows and reestablishes the bond. He knows that we will sometimes be afraid and want to run. Have you visited any caves lately? Has God called you back?" (Tom Page).

The principal, as prophet, is called to "call" others back to the covenant, not just to make people comfortable. In this commitment it is necessary to take a look at a variety of opportunities for ministry to the particular people each principal is called.

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Below is a checklist pertaining to ways of relating with the people to whom the principal ministers most frequently.

1. A principal teaches parents in a variety of ways through personal contacts, telephone conversations home visits, home and school meetings, bulletins, letters . . .

- How do you answer the phone? Is the voice friendly or condescending?
- What do you do to welcome new students and their parents on their first day in the building?
- How do you report a student's positive progress? The Happygram may seem trite, but mothers carry them around in their purses for weeks.
- How do you report a student's problems to parents? And what about the average student who does not get into trouble?
- How do you explain what your school stands for? What do kids get here that they won't get anywhere else? What's your USP — your Unique Selling Proposition?
- Do you demonstrate empathy and understanding towards parents' problems?
- Do you take time to speak about ministry in the home to a parent or a parent group? Reminding parents that they are cocreators with God? Helping them teach Christian values in the home, too?
- Do you extend the mission of the Catholic school by reaching parents through the children?

2. Principals teach the pastor in very important ways. They work with the pastor on matters pertaining to religious education of children, including courses of study, religious practices, liturgical functions, parent-education programs. Principals communicate regularly and effectively with the Pastor on all school-related matters; and work with the Pastor to ensure that school is a vital part of the parish community.

- Do you schedule time to meet with the Pastor to share and to plan for the optimum in Catholic education?
- Do you seek the strong spiritual leadership of the Pastor in developing faith community within the parish school?
- Do you seek the assistance of the Pastor as a prime resource person for keeping the faculty up-dated in contemporary theology and the teachings of the Church?

3. Principals teach teachers. They are the master teachers in the school. The center of their role is to be a teacher of teachers. Their expertise in the area of teaching personal formation and values, forgiveness and reconciliation is experienced in being a sort of court of last resort on discipline.

- How do you welcome and orient a new teacher? Often the attitude created by that first day lasts for years. Talk to a new teacher about the importance of the ministry of teaching.
- How do you foster a climate of trust in which teachers can share ideas, ideals and faith experiences?
- How do you introduce new ideas to the staff?
- How do you evaluate the performance of teachers and other employees? Does your approach build up the mind of Christ and transform the lives of people?
- Do you encourage personal, scriptural prayer?
- Do you help teachers acquire skills in leading prayer? Help them capture the teachable and prayable moments?
- Do you encourage a lived faith? When necessary do you help teachers work through negative feelings towards students, the Church . . .?
- How do you help teachers become post-Vatican II in their religious understandings and practices: catechetics, morality, ecumenism . . .?
- Do you assist and support the teacher in pupil disciplinary cases?
- How do you stimulate professional growth and effectiveness of your teachers?
- Do you help teachers to be self-possessed so that they do not react, but rather respond, to children?
- How often do you help your teachers feel good about themselves? Catch a vision of a personal potential not previously perceived?
- What do you and your staff do to put some pride in the school? School spirit does more than boost football teams. Choose a school theme as a basis for devotional life and for looking to the Word of God. Have a big banner in the entrance hallway and office: "He is our God and we are His people."

4. Principals teach children through positive reinforcement and recognition of students, through encouraging student con-

duct which reflects the Gospel message, getting to know each child personally and taking a personal interest in individual students.

- How do you arrange for giving recognition to children? Periodic awards or public praise cost little, but let people know you care about them.
- How do you communicate empathy and understanding toward students' problems? Do you show respect for students as individuals?
- As a Christian administrator, do you appear to the students as one who is always pointing them in the direction of Jesus?
- What happens to the student when he leaves your care? Do you invite return visits and show interest in his future?

5. The Principal is the one person in any school who is continually informing the community, people outside the school, about all the good things happening within the school. The Principal is the Community Builder, with a challenging task, that is complex and as rewarding as it is exhausting. A principal builds, shapes, forms, influences school community — an awesome opportunity.

- As a Christian administrator, does your person communicate "joy" to others?
- How do you demonstrate belief in the philosophy and goals of the Catholic school?
- How do you communicate the goals and objectives of the school to the parish and civic community?
- How do you foster growth in Christian service to others in the parish and local community as an expression of the school's philosophy?
- How do you promote good public relations in and out of school?
- Do you encourage opportunities for students to serve the human needs of others in the parish and local community?
- Do you schedule time to read, to think, to plan, to clarify and communicate your share of the vision for Catholic education?

A prophet is one who comforts the *afflicted* and afflicts the *comfortable*. A principal gives courage to and comforts the afflicted — the afflicted sometimes being a very scared begin-

ning teacher, sometimes an old, experienced teacher who is very tired and disappointed. A principal is one who, when necessary, afflicts the comfortable -- a complacent teacher, an arrogant pastor, a know-it-all superintendent, an over-satisfied student, a domineering and sensitive parent. Being a prophet is a tough and lonely business. Only the strong should apply.

"This is a trying time, O God. I fear
My faith is not as strong as I had thought.
It seemed it was your hand that brought me here;
And yet — fulfillment seems so vainly sought.
I need reminding that you lead me on;
This darkness of the spirit blinds my sight.
Within your hands I know there lies the dawn;
I wait your guidance through this lonely night"
(Hazel Nowell Ailor).

Principals need to see their work as something with an inner, powerful thrust toward holiness, as quasi-sacramental, signed with cross and resurrection, a sacred task, a holy ground they enter with beautiful feet: "How beautiful are the feet of those who go forth to tell the Good News" (Is 52 : 7; 61 : 1-3).

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What particular message does the community I minister to need in order to strengthen its covenanted relationship with the Lord?
2. What am I called to do as a response to my experience with the Lord and this community?
3. What personal demands does that make on my lifestyle? What is the message I must live out among the persons whom my life touches?
4. What am I going to do about it?

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE READINGS

Here are some references for seven prayers or dialogues between God and Old Testament prophets. Read and meditate on one each day for a week.

Isaiah's Temple Experience	Isaiah 6 : 1-13
Jeremiah's Call	Jeremiah 1 : 4-10
Daniel's Thanksgiving	Daniel 2 : 20-23

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Elijah's Discouragement	1 Kings 19 : 9-13
Ezekiel's Call	Ezekiel 2 : 1-3; 3
Jonah's Prayer for Deliverance	Jonah 2 : 1-9
Jeremiah's Discouragement	Jeremiah 20 : 7-18

"WALK TOWARD YOUR GOAL WITH BOLD STEPS,
BUT KNOW THAT YOU ARE STILL GOOD
IF YOU GO THITHER LIMPING."

guidelines for reflection for diocesan office personnel

Brother Dominic Berardelli, FSC

The renewal of awareness in the purpose of our schools as "Catholic" has led to a new dynamism within the Catholic-School community reemphasizing the evangelical role of teachers in our institutions. This is by no means an easy task and Offices of Education are challenged to "give form to a vision" which is the very heartbeat of our Catholic Schools. The mission of our educational institutions must be precisely their evangelical fulfillment.

> "Its [the Catholic School's] task is fundamentally a synthesis of culture and faith, and synthesis of faith and life: The first is reached by integrating all the different aspects of human knowledge through the subjects taught, in the light of the Gospel; the second, in the growth of the virtues characteristic of the Christian." (The Catholic School, #37)

To imbue faculties with the beauty, importance and sacredness of their calling as teachers intimately involved with the mission of Church is an awesome task. As Chief Administrators, we are called upon at this, our "now" in salvation history to shift emphasis from academic excellence and financial security to the true and authentic purpose of our Catholic schools. This is not to say that we negate or neglect the educational goals, but rather that we respond courageously and directly to the fundamental vision of our schools.

Presuming, for the moment, that those of us in Offices of Education understand and are imbued with the spirit of zeal for the salvation of our students, then we must, in turn, inspire our principals and their school staffs to share this same zeal.

> "The real problem facing the Catholic School is to identify and lay down the conditions necessary for it to fulfill its mission" (The Catholic School, #64).

One of the chief duties of diocesan Offices of Education is to ensure that the principals in the schools are relieved, as much as possible, from the multitude of administrative details that consume their time and energies. New educational theories and

programs aimed precisely at achieving greater efficiency and organization too often lead education offices to increase rather than decrease work loads in the schools. Our primary goal is the evangelization of our students; that should shift much of Diocesan Office direction away from "administrative functioning" and towards a concentration of resources and talents that responds directly to the call of evangelization. What then are some of the practical ways which Diocesan Offices can take to redirect their school administrators and through them staffs, to their authentic purpose as spiritual leaders—prophets—of the school community? Perhaps each Office may generate ideas, adaptable and suitable to their own locale.

"You are my witnesses," says the Lord, "you are my servants whom I have chosen to know and believe in Me and to understand that it is I" (Isaiah 43 : 10).

"Witnessing" must first come from within—"out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."
"You must bear witness as well" (Jn 16 : 27).

I. Process of "self-building" must begin within the Department.

1. Have staff members discuss their role as prophetic witness of the Good News. What time has been scheduled (at the beginning of each school year, etc.) for formal discussion on this important aspect of its ministry?

   As a total diocesan office staff, what is our present emphasis on the "spiritual" development of our administrators as opposed to their "professional and educational" development?

2. Have the ideas discussed taken the form of definite statements regarding the primacy of spreading the Good News?
3. Does the Department have a written statement of philosophy that speaks to the witnessing of the Christian message as its prime functions?
4. Has the concept of spreading the "Good News" been renewed, discussed, kept alive by constantly recalling it at selected times—staff meetings, etc.?
5. Has the Office staff arranged for spiritual direction, retreats, prayer sessions to build up its own spiritual life?

How frequently do our administrators meet for "spiritual formation" as opposed to "business meetings?"

Do diocesan office directives reflect an attitude of "more things to accomplish or more forms to fill out" or are they reflective comments, prayers and prayer themes helping administrators to grow spiritually?

6. Has the idea of employing a spiritual director for principals and teachers been considered?

"Their message goes out through all the earth." (Eph 4 : 1-7)

II. What means are used to make the schools aware of the priority of the Christian message as lived by the Office staff?
   1. Is the philosophy shared with the principals at least once a year and is it discussed and input accepted from the principals?
   2. Is each school encouraged to include a statement of the priority of the Christian witness in its philosophy?
   3. Are principals and staff asked to evaluate the Office in terms of the "practice" of its philosophy as they see it?

III. What helps are given to principals to continue this spreading of the Christian message?
   1. Does the Office supply/suggest a monthly Theme — a theme uniting all schools in a consistent effort to promote the living out of Christian message? — how is this Theme announced — monthly newsletter, etc.?
   2. Are principals encouraged and assisted to provide opportunities for spiritual experiences for their faculties? Is time scheduled on the calendar for this purpose?
   3. Does the Office provide for yearly retreats for its principals?
   4. Are lists of spiritual directors and retreat masters available to principals?
   5. Are principals encouraged and assisted to provide opportunities for spiritual experiences for their staff and students?
   6. Are prayer groups and prayer sessions among teachers and principals encouraged and facilitated?

7. How do diocesan office personnel respond to the needs and demands of time placed upon them by principals, parents, and teachers who are experiencing difficulties and problems?

In the overwhelming reality of the tasks and work to be accomplished in the administration of our schools, it is paramount to keep our hearts and minds on our true and authentic call to the ministry of the Word. Only in a strong and dynamic emphasis on this call will our schools fulfill their purpose and our staffs worthily represent the Christ, Lord.

"And they said to one another, Were not our hearts burning inside us as He talked to us on the road and explained the Scripture to us?" (Lk 24 : 32)

Our ultimate aim through our administrators and staffs is to inflame the hearts of our students with Christ and His message.

guidelines for reflection for parish directors of religious education

Thomas Smith

There are many ways to talk about anything or anyone. Fr. Avery Dulles, for example, describes five models of Church; Dr. Lawrence Kohlberg identifies six stages of moral development; and James Fowler outlines six steps in the growth of faith. All descriptions, models, and outlines are designed to help us get a handle on some elusive aspects of life. If such a model or theme is successful, it will help clarify a topic; if the theme or description does not add clarity, it deserves to be ignored.

The DRE as Prophet is a theme or model that could be pivotal in describing who a DRE is and what s/he does. The work of a parish DRE, in its present, evolving form, is a relatively new ministry in the American Catholic Church. The mid 1960s saw the emergence of parish coordinators. Parishes with schools and without schools began to recognize a need for someone to guide the development and implementation of religious education programs. Many job descriptions were attempted; some had good results, others failed for a wide variety of reasons. Now, a dozen years later, the role of the parish DRE is becoming clearer. In many parts of the country, DREs are settling into a stable, accepted, form of educational ministry.

Describing a DRE as Prophet raises a number of preliminary questions. First of all, why even consider the role of the DRE when the over-all title of this in-service, NCEA packet is "Principal as Prophet?" Is the DRE a principal? Yes and no. There are obvious ways in which the DRE is not a principal. The role of principal emerges from a school setting. The responsibilities of the principal flow from a need for leadership in the day-to-day operation of a school. A parish school, its students, teachers, parents, and parish, must have educational leadership and administrative ability in order to maintain the smooth running of the institution. The principal attempts to supply this leadership and this ability. The principal is necessarily concerned about Religious Education in the school as well as the development of faith within the educational community.

But the Principal's responsibilities go beyond formal religious education; they involve Math, English, the Physical and Social Sciences, and a host of other subjects and extracurricular activities that outline the services of a modern Catholic School. The DRE does not have these responsibilities, and in this sense, the principal and the DRE are different.

There are other areas of difference. The principal will work with a staff of certified, degreed teachers; the DRE probably works with a staff that includes volunteer catechists. The role of the principal is more clearly defined because of the long history of the position; the role of the DRE is still emerging. The principal concentrates on the school community; the DRE has more direct responsibility for students not attending parochial school and, in more and more places, for Adult Religious Education. There are then obvious differences between Principals and DREs.

However, in these guidelines it should be helpful to both principals and DREs to focus on the similarities between their respective roles. In many ways, the DRE functions like a principal. And since the role of principal is more clearly perceived both by principals themselves and by the parish community, it should be enlightening to view the DRE, first of all, as principal and, secondly, as prophet.

Granted the differences already mentioned, there still remain many ways in which DREs and principals are similar. The DRE is an educational administrator; so too is the principal. Both need a knowledge of educational methods and philosophy, but beyond this basic knowledge, both also need to be a leader of teachers. The DRE and the principal have key contributions in the creation of a Christian atmosphere among faculty, students, and parents. Both have responsibilities for long-range planning as well as for the practical details that are part of their positions. Both are leaders in the parish community. Both attempt to communicate their philosophy and theology to the parish community. DREs, as well as principals, participate in area or diocesan-wide professional associations designed to increase their competence. Principals and DREs are directly involved with budget planning, expenditures, funding, and financial reports. Both are held accountable by the pastor and the parish for the successful operation of their respective area of responsibil-

ity. The DRE and the principal are usually members of the Parish staff and participate in staff policy- and planning-meetings.

If the DRE is like a principal, then the observations in the lead article of this packet regarding the Principal as Prophet are also applicable to the parish DRE. The DRE is also a prophet.

This comment raises a question which needs at least a brief reply. When we speak of the DRE, or the principal, as prophet, do we refer to personal prophecy or a positional prophecy? Personal prophecy means that an individual is called in a special way to speak God's Word. Positional prophecy implies that the role itself assumes prophetic characteristics.

Usually, the DRE will be a prophet in the second sense: the position is prophetic, since the position reflects one aspect of the presence of the Spirit within the total Christian community. As Sr. Rose Marie pointed out in her article, we are all prophets by our Baptism but the DRE and the principal are in a position to express and implement that part of Christian identity in a specifically educational framework.

The DRE, then, is more a positional prophet than a personal prophet. But the role carries with it serious responsibilities.

The purpose of the following guideline is to outline these responsibilities. Guidelines, naturally, are meant to be just that — guides; they are not rules, but they are more than mere suggestions. Guidelines are general statements based on experience and research which are designed to aid people in discovering their responsibilities more clearly and in applying their skills more competently. It is in this spirit that the following are offered. Individual DREs can read, reflect, and evaluate these statements, and apply them to their local situation. DRE associations may find it helpful to discuss these guidelines in a group setting. In any case, the starting point for these statements is Sr. Rose Marie's analysis of the Principal/DRE as Prophet.

I. The DRE as Individual
   A. The Personality of the DRE:
      1. There is no perfect personality for the role of DRE.
      2. But the kind of person you are has a profound effect on the kind of DRE you are.
      3. Anxiety in your personal life will probably affect your performance as a DRE. Be aware of this effect and

consciously attempt to separate personal tension from job-related tension.

4. Some general personality characteristics that are helpful to a DRE:
   a. A DRE should be *outgoing*. The DRE deals with people, and therefore should be generally comfortable with others. Shy, private people who cannot talk to groups can be very kind, faith-filled individuals, but they should not be DREs.
   b. A DRE should be *adaptable*. This characteristic does not preclude the need to be a visionary. But a DRE must also be able to handle details, compromise on issues that are not essential, adapt methodology, change emphasis, and abandon pet projects in favor of the needs of a local community. The adaptable DRE is someone who is able to get things done.
   c. A DRE is someone who should *not be easily upset*. Best laid plans fall apart all too often. The personality of the DRE should be resilient enough to cope with these complications.
   d. A DRE should be able to *accept criticism*. Since a DRE is a public person and a prophet, some criticism should be expected. An ability to deal with this criticism is valuable.

B. The Faith of the DRE:
   1. Obviously, the DRE should be a person of faith.
   2. The DRE should be a person who not only believes in the Messiah, in Jesus, in the presence of the Spirit and the love of the Father, but who also is capable of expressing that faith in word and deed.
   3. The DRE need not be a theologian as such, but does need to be familiar with theology.

C. Definition of a DRE:
   1. A DRE is a minister of the Gospel who provides educational opportunities for others to respond to the love of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
      a. A DRE should be someone who is willing to serve other people.
      b. A DRE should be a specialist in educational methods and principles.

c. "Educational" should be understood in its broadest sense, that is, any exchange among Christians who are involved because they are Christians. The DRE should be able to provide these opportunities.
d. The DRE attempts to eliminate obstacles between the Father's love and the people being served.
e. The DRE should be able to lead and guide the teaching ministry of individual catechists.

2. A DRE should be professional in the sense of having the ability to fulfill the responsibilities of the ministry competently.
   a. A DRE should know what that position requires.
   b. A DRE should possess the skills to complete the job competently.
   c. A DRE should be skilled in the following four areas:
      1) Theology
      2) Education
      3) Management
      4) Communication
   d. A DRE who is deficient in one or more of these areas should gain that skill or the parish should supplement the deficiency through some other resource.
   e. Normally, a DRE receives some schooling in the necessary skills or has been able to learn these skills from experience.

II. The DRE in Relation with Others
   A. The Parish as Community:
      1. Obviously the relationship between the DRE and the parish served should be a close one.
      2. While the formation of Christian community is ultimately the responsibility of the Holy Spirit, a DRE is a cooperator and cocreator with the Spirit.
      3. The parish community is both incarnational and eschatological; it is "now," and it is "not yet." A DRE should strive to contribute to the betterment of the total parish community.
      4. Some of the qualities of a genuine Christian community are the following:
         a. The people know one another. A DRE should provide opportunities and encourage parishioners to

get to know one another better.

b. The people want to pray and worship together. A DRE should provide opportunities and encourage parishioners not only to worship together but to *want* to worship together.

c. The people reflect together. A DRE should provide opportunities and encourage parishioners to study, discuss, share values, and struggle over contemporary moral issues. They learn the Gospels and teachings of the Church; they know Jesus as the Person-Heart of the community. Through these experiences, a DRE should try to deepen the sense of community in all its aspects—fellowship, worship, service, and faith.

d. The people respond to needs together. A DRE should provide opportunities and encourage parishioners to recognize that service to others is an essential element in any genuine Christian Community.

B. The Parish Educational Community:

1. A DRE should work closely with those people in the parish who concentrate on the educational ministry.
2. A DRE should express personal expectations of the position and listen to the expectations of the position as expressed by clergy, councils, or committees.
   a. If basic agreement can be reached regarding these expectations, then the DRE should attempt to implement these goals.
   b. If basic agreement cannot be reached, the DRE should either seek employment elsewhere, change expectations, or attempt to change the expectations of the clergy, councils, or committees.
3. A DRE should provide educational leadership to the faculty.
4. Where there is a parish school, a DRE should work closely with the Principal in determining responsibility for specific aspects of their respective roles.

As was mentioned above, these guidelines are designed to help DREs, individually or in groups, clarify their roles. If these

guidelines are implemented, it can be assumed that the DRE is functioning as a prophet. This prophecy is not isolated or individualized. This prophecy is basically a quality of a Spirit-filled community. But it is a prophecy that has many expressions and aspects. One of these aspects is education. It is this aspect of the prophetic role that a DRE expresses.

It is in this sense that a DRE is a prophet, and it is this theme of prophecy that can help clarify the role of a DRE in a parish.

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